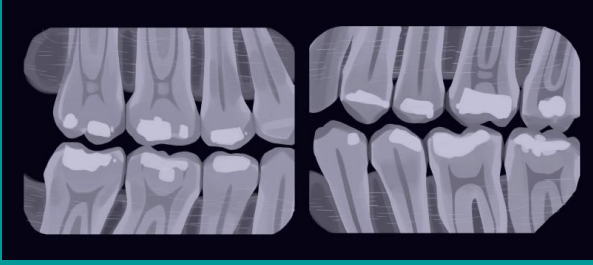


Oregon House Bill 2996



House Bill 2996 proposes removing the current **Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) Examination** required for dental assistants in the State of Oregon. Removing this requirement could put dental patients at risk.

HISTORY

Oregon Dental Assistants are required to demonstrate knowledge and proficiency through education, written examinations, and clinical competencies. **Removal of the written examination will eliminate the need for understanding radiation exposure and the effects it can have on dental patients.**

WHAT ARE SUPPORTERS OF THE BILL SAYING?

“The exam is too expensive”. **FALSE.** The exam costs \$270.

“The radiology course is too expensive”. **FALSE.** The DALE Foundation offers a 12-credit online course for \$130 that is approved by the Oregon Board of Dentistry.

“The exam is out of date. Dip tanks are still included in the exam”. **FALSE.** Dental Assisting Nation Board (DANB) removed conventional radiology information.

“The exam is too hard”. **FALSE.** DANB reported that Oregon has a very high pass rate. **In fact, 71% of Oregon exam takers pass the exam on the first attempt while 82% pass the exam within the first or second attempt.**

“The exam is a barrier for dental assistants to obtain their radiology certificate and/or expanded function certificate”. **FALSE.** It is only a barrier for those who are not knowledgeable in radiation health and safety.

“The exam is only provided in English”. DANB is already working on offering exams in additional languages. However, please note that DH and DDS board exams are currently only offered in English.

RAMIFICATIONS IF HOUSE BILL 2996 PASSES

- Lower Quality Dental Assistant
- Patient Safety and ALARA at Risk
- Lower Respect for the Profession
- Lower Pay
- Lower Retention in the Field
- Lower Interest in Joining the Field
- Quality of Care

Thus, further increasing the dental assisting shortage in Oregon

WHY HOUSE BILL 2996 IS NOT THE FIX

- Will set the dental assisting profession back instead of enhancing it.
- Was already reviewed by the Oregon Board of Dentistry’s Licensing, Competency, and Standards Committee in Dec 2022. **The committee decided not to move the proposal (to remove the RHS exam) forward.**
- Undermines American Dental Association Health Policy Institute, et al. workforce initiatives to solve DA workforce crises by enhancing state certification

DENTAL ASSISTING SHORTAGE FACTS

- The 9 Community College Dental Assisting Programs in Oregon are only 65% full
- ADA Report shows 45.6% decline in dental assisting enrollment nationwide from 2011-2021 (Conversely, dental hygiene enrollment has increased 5.7%)
- 47 CODA accredited dental assisting programs have closed mainly due to low enrollment since 2011

ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO SOLVE THE DENTAL ASSISTING SHORTAGE

Research to support the following has been completed and published:

- Enhance state certification (supports American Dental Association Health Policy Institute, et al. workforce incentive to solve the dental assisting workforce crises)
- Help dental assisting programs with marketing to increase dental assisting enrollment
- Support opportunities for growth and advancement
- Form a workplace coalition to address low pay and encourage employers to increase pay and benefits (supports American Dental Association Health Policy Institute, et al. workforce incentives)